

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

***Listing of Claims:***

1. (Amended) A tubular encasing netting for sausage and the like, wherein said encasing netting has a longitudinally running tear-open thread ~~(3)~~, the length of which is greater than that of the encasing netting ~~(4)~~ which is in the state of use.
2. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 1, wherein the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ forms at least one loop ~~(7)~~ capable of being grasped on the outside of the netting.
3. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 2, wherein said netting has a structure extendible in the longitudinal direction, and the ends ~~(14)~~ of the loop ~~(7)~~ are connected to points ~~(8)~~ of the netting ~~(4)~~ which are at a greater distance from one another in the longitudinally extended state than in the state of use.
4. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the netting has honeycomb strands and the honeycomb strands ~~(5, 6)~~ of the netting ~~(4)~~ are composed of knitting stitches ~~(8, 9, 10, 11)~~, and the tear-open thread is bound into these.
5. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 4, wherein the honeycomb strands ~~(5, 6)~~ of the netting ~~(4)~~ are knitted partially as fringes, and the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ is bound into the fringes.

6. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 5, wherein the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ lies between a pair of stitch legs ~~(44)~~ and a sinker thread ~~(8)~~.
7. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 6, wherein the sinker thread ~~(8)~~ lies on the outside of the netting ~~(4)~~.
8. (Amended) The netting as claimed in claim 4 ~~one of claims 4 to 7~~, wherein the netting strands ~~(5 or 6)~~ containing the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ are adhesively bonded to the associated sausage casing and/or to the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~.
9. (Amended) A method for producing a netting tube by knitting or tying, which has a greater length in the production state than in the state of use, wherein, during production, a tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ is worked in, which, during the shortening of the netting ~~(4)~~ at the transition to the state of use, is caused to form, between at least two points at which it is connected to the netting, a loop which is accessible from outside.
10. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the netting is produced as a double-rib or warp-knit fabric, and the tear-open thread is inserted into knitting stitches.

11. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein ~~it~~ the tear-open thread is inserted in each case into a stitch of all the fringes ~~(6)~~ of successive netting honeycombs ~~(4)~~.
12. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 9 ~~one of claims 9 to 11~~, wherein the tear-open thread ~~(3)~~ is inserted between the stitch legs ~~(11)~~ and ~~the~~ an associated sinker thread ~~(8)~~.
13. (Amended) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the fabric is subsequently reversed, if the sinker thread ~~(8)~~ lies on the inside during production.
14. (Amended) A sausage casing which is connected to an encasing netting ~~(4)~~ as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 8~~.
15. (Amended) The sausage casing as claimed in claim 14, wherein the encasing netting ~~(4)~~ is adhesively bonded to the sausage casing.
16. (Amended) The sausage casing as claimed claim 15, wherein the knitted encasing netting has honeycomb strands ~~(5)~~ running in the longitudinal direction and designed as a tricot, and adhesive bonding to the sausage casing is more secure or more frequent or over a larger area in the region of these longitudinally running honeycomb strands ~~(5)~~ than in the region of the transversely running honeycomb strands ~~(6)~~.

17. (Amended) A sausage or the like with a sausage casing closed at the ends, wherein said sausage is encased by an encasing netting (4) as claimed in claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 to 8 or by a sausage casing as claimed in one of claims 14 to 16 and the ends of the tear open thread (3) are secured in the end closures (2) of the sausage casing.~~

18. (New) A sausage or the like with a sausage casing closed at the ends, wherein said sausage is encased by an encasing netting a sausage casing as claimed in claim 14 and having end closures and the ends of the tear-open thread are secured in the end closures of the sausage casing.

19. (New) The netting as claimed in claim 2, wherein the netting has honeycomb strands and the honeycomb strands of the netting are composed of knitting stitches, and the tear-open thread is bound into these.

20. (New) The netting as claimed in claim 3, wherein the netting has honeycomb strands and the honeycomb strands of the netting are composed of knitting stitches, and the tear-open thread is bound into these.